

Message Text

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12
ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
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CINCUSAFE
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, TU
SUBJ: THE OPPOSITION COUNTERATTACKS

1. AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, ECEVIT'S REPUBLICAN
PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP), FEARING ITS POPULARITY HAS ALREADY
PEAKED, IS ANXIOUS TO GO TO ELECTIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ONE
FACET OF THE RPP EFFORT FOR EARLY ELECTIONS IS A
PROPOSAL IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WHICH PROVIDES FOR ELECTIONS
WITHIN 60 DAYS. THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY MET MARCH 31 TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSAL AND REJECTED
IT BY A VOTE OF 10 TO 8.
HOWEVER, SINCE THE PROPOSAL WAS STALLED IN THE COMMITTEE FOR MORE
THAN 45 DAYS BEFORE COMING TO A VOTE, THE RPP MAY, DESPITE THE
UNFAVORABLE COMMITTEE VOTE, ATTEMPT TO BRING IT TO THE FLOOR FOR A
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VOTE WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. THE RPP IS MAKING AN ALL OUT FINAL

EFFORT TO DO THIS, BUT ACCORDING TO A RPP DEPUTY CLOSE TO THE LEADERSHIP, THE PARTY IS NOT OPTIMISTIC.

2. ANOTHER CURRENT RPP EFFORT, AND ONE ABOUT WHICH THE LEADERSHIP IS MORE HOPEFUL, IS THE ATTEMPT TO KEEP THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT FROM WINNING ITS INITIAL VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. THE RPP IS HOPEFUL THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S DEFEAT WOULD PRODUCE A "POLITICAL SHOCK" THAT WOULD FACILITATE A PARLIAMENTARY DECISION FOR EARLY ELECTIONS.

3. A SPOKESMAN FOR THE FICE INDEPENDENT DEPUTIES CONSIDERED TO BE SUPPORTERS OF THE COALITION ANNOUNCED MARCH 31 THAT THEY WERE NOT ABSOLUTELY COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING THE GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD DECIDED IN PRINCIPLE TO FACILITATE THE DORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE RPP BELIEVES THIS STATEMENT DOES NOT AT THIS POINT MEAN A LOSS OF THOSE VOTES FOR DEMIREL BUT RATHER THAT THE INDEPENDENTS ARE REOPENING THE BIDDING. IT IS A POSSIBLE CRACK IN THE COALITION, HOWEVER, AND THE RPP WILL ATTEMPT TO EXPLOIT IT.

4. THE RPP LEADERSHIP BELIEVES THAT A MORE IMPORTANT POTENTIAL WEAK SPOT IN THE COALITION IS THE REPUBLICAN RELIANCE PARTY (RR). RR CHARIMAN TURHAN FEYZIOGLU ALLEGEDLY ANTAGONIZED SOME ALREADY UNHAPPY RR DEPUTIES BY NAMING A NON-PARLIAMENTARIAN TO ONE OF THE FOUR RR CABINET POSITIONS. THE RP IS HOPEFUL THAT IT WILL BE ABLE TO ENTICE SOME OF THESE DISSIDENTS TO LEAVE THE RR.

5. ON MARCH 31 RPP CHAIRMAN BLUENT ECEVIT, AS PART OF THE CONTINUING RPP PUBLIC ATTACK ON THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT, SAID THE NEWLY-FORMED DEMIREL GOVERNMENT IS A MINORITY GOVERNMENT BECAUSE THE PARTIES COMPOSING IT DO NOT COMMAND A MAJORITY IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (WITHOUT INDEPENDENTS' SUPPORT). HE STATED ONE HAD TO BE "OVER OPTIMISTIC" TO BELIEVE SUCH A WEAK GOVERNMENT COULD BE EFFECTIVE OR STABLE. HE ALSO MADE THE POINT THAT TURKEY'S FOREIGN RELATIONS WERE HAMPERED BY THE ABSENCE OF A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT.

6. COMMENT: DEMIREL IS CLOSER TO WINNING A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE THAN ANYBODY HAS BEEN IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS. HIS MARGIN IS SO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THIS, HOWEVER, AND RPP BITTERNESS AND OPPOSITION SO INTENSE, THAT ONE CANNOT ENTIRELY DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY THAT ECEVIT OPERATIVES WILL BE ABLE TO PRODUCE LAST MINUTE DEFECTIONS FROM DEMIREL'S RAZOR-THIN MAJORITY AND THEREBY PREVENT THE LATTER'S ACHIEVING A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. AT THIS POINT WE WOULD HAVE TO SAY THAT THIS IS NOT LIKELY BUT IT IS POSSIBLE.
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